



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

TRANSACTIONS
OF THE
KILKENNY ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY,
FOR THE YEAR 1851.

PRIMÆVAL PERIOD.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE EXCAVATION OF A CARN AT
CLOGHMANTY HILL.

BY THE REV. JAMES GRAVES.

[*Read at the Meeting of November 5th.*]

ABOUT one fourth of a mile distant in a south-easterly direction from the Spa of Ballyspellan,* and on the highest point of the western extremity of the range of limestone hills which stretch from Durrow to Johnstown, formerly stood one of the most remarkable carns of which the County of Kilkenny could boast; and although it had of late years been greatly dilapidated—indeed literally so, for the stones of which the carn was composed have supplied materials for the construction of the numerous walls which intersect the surrounding surface of the hill—still enough remained to mark the site of the monument, and afford some indication of its former importance. The late Mr. Tighe, in his *Statistical Observations relative to the County of Kilkenny*, p. 623, gives the following description of the carn as it existed in his day:—

“On the top of the hill of Cloghmanta, commanding an extensive and magnificent view, is another ancient *Pyratheia*, a circular heap of stones 87 paces round; it is placed within a circular fence of stones, which encloses two or three acres, and is distant from the heap, in the nearest part, about 95 yards; the heap is nearest to the eastern side: part of the circle has been lately destroyed to make a wall: in Irish this is called, like other heaps, *See Finn* or *Sith Finn*. (See III. Collect. 490).”

* In this locality was found the silver brooch bearing an Ogham inscription (now in the Museum of the Royal Dublin Society) which has been deciphered by Professor Graves. See *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, Vol. IV. p. 184.

The testimony of the old men of the locality agrees in the main with this description. One man, who resides on the farm, as herd and caretaker to the tenant, Mr. Mulhall, of Mullinahone, informed me that about forty years ago he assisted in removing the stones from the carn, in order to build the walls already alluded to: before the work of dilapidation commenced, the carn, he said, was fourteen yards in height, and so steep that in order to ascend it one should use the assistance of their hands, as well as their feet. My informant did not remember any upright stones encircling the base of the carn, but he had a perfect recollection of many large slabs lying on the circular fence which surrounded it at the distance of ninety, or ninety-two yards: these stones were broken and removed for the purpose already indicated. Another old man described the carn as having formerly been, to his knowledge, a "great battery." When I first visited the hill, the average height of the carn above the surrounding surface was six feet, its plan I found to be an irregular circle, of the average diameter of seventy feet; a small cist, which will be hereafter more fully described, lay open south of its centre, and a large pile of loose stones occupied the central portion, having been erected by the officers of the Ordnance Survey of Ireland, and forming one of their principal trigonometrical points, which is marked on the townland survey of the County of Kilkenny, sheet 8, as being 1156 feet above the level of the sea; some few flag-shaped limestones, placed on edge, marked the circumference of the carn; but they were of no great size or height. As already remarked, at a distance of about ninety-two yards a circular stone fence, very perfect on the east, south, and west sides, and faintly traceable on the north, surrounded the central carn; several large slabs fixed on edge in the ground formed the internal and external face of this circle or septum, giving an average thickness to the wall of about five feet—in no place do these stones at present extend more than three feet above the surface. The name by which this monument is at present known is See Fionn (*Suidhe Fionn*), and it is traditionally said to have been a great place of assembly and conference in the old times.* For whatever purpose constructed, it had evidently cost immense labour to collect such a mass of surface stones from the surrounding land (for of such, consisting solely of limestone, was it formed), and the accuracy of the circular septum evinced considerable care and skill on the part of the designers. Mr. Tighe (p. 624) had assumed the place to be a *Pyratheia*, or fire temple; but his arguments not having been deemed conclusive, and a sepulchral origin appearing from analogy to afford a much more feasible explanation of its peculiarities of construction, an examination of what remained of the carn

* The combination of the sessional and sepulchral character in such monuments no doubt frequently took place. "It was Amhalgaidh, the son of Fiachra Ealgach, that raised Carn Amhalgaidh to serve as a place of fairs and great meetings; and it was in it Amhalgaidh himself was interred."—*The Tribes and Customs of Hy-Fiachra*, edited by John O'Donovan, LL.D., for the Irish Archæological Society, p. 101.

was felt to be most desirable, as the most likely mode of setting the question at rest. At one of the early meetings of this Society, the Rev. James Mease, corresponding member for the Freshford District, had called attention to the Cloghmanty carn, and suggested the propriety of making a thorough examination of its contents. Mr. Mease had not since lost sight of the matter, and having obtained permission from Michael Cahill, Esq., agent to the proprietor, Lord Mountgarret, the 17th of September last was fixed on for the purpose.

On the day appointed, a working party and the necessary implements having been provided, the Rev. Luke Fowler, Rev. Henry Herbert, Rev. James Mease, Charles Hely, Esq., Henry Herbert, Esq., C. E., Dr. Thompson, of Johnstown, and some English gentlemen interested in the matter, were met by my brother Secretary, Mr. Prim, and myself, on the summit of Cloghmanty hill, and operations were commenced. It was thought most advisable to make a section of the carn from east to west; and in pursuance of this plan, a trench six feet wide, was commenced at the eastern edge of the carn, and driven on toward the centre, extending down to the original surface of the ground. Nothing but a few tips of deers' horns occurred in this cutting until the centre of the carn was nearly reached. Here the stones occurred of a larger size, and presently a regular wall, consisting of four immense stones, averaging six feet long, and from two feet six to three feet wide, piled one on the other, presented itself, extending north and south across the cutting. At the distance of four feet six beyond this wall, and lying parallel thereto, was found a similar pile of five stones. The chamber thus formed was about three feet six inches deep, and was closed at its southern extremity by a large slab, placed on edge, and rather inclining inward. The northern extremity was built up with smaller stones, which seemed to have been piled against it, without any order or regularity, when the carn was being formed. This large cist had probably been originally closed at top by two large limestone slabs, each about five feet long, and between three and four feet wide. These slabs having probably been disturbed by the persons employed to remove the stones of the carn, had fallen into the cavity beneath them. On removing the small stones and rubbish with which this chamber was choked, a floor of yellow clay, totally differing from the earth which lies over the rocky surface of the hill, presented itself; and embedded in this clay, as if comminuted and pressed down by the weight of the extraneous matter which had fallen into the chamber, were found the component parts of two adult human skeletons. The heads lay to the south, and the skeletons were clearly traceable towards the north by the vertebræ, hip, thigh, and leg-bones, and finally the bones of the ankle, instep, and toes, which last were found at the north end of the chamber. The bones of the head and hips were in such an imperfect state that it was impossible to decide whether the skeletons were those of males or females. No implement, ornament, or utensil of any kind presented itself, although a most careful examination of every portion of the clay forming the floor of the cavity was

made ; there were, indeed, quantities of the common land shells found along with the bones, but they were plainly the remains of successive generations of land molluscs, which had crept into the interstices between the stones, and there died. It may, indeed, be said that this chamber was opened at the time of the destruction of the carn, and anything that it contained removed ; but besides the positive testimony of old persons on the spot that this had not taken place, there is a great probability that some one implement should have escaped the search of persons, who would naturally have set little value on the bone or stone ornaments which might be expected to present themselves in a tomb of this class. The great central chamber, just described, was not, however, the only sepulchral deposit embraced within the limits of this carn. About eight feet south of the former, and on a much higher level, bearing S.W. by S., a small cist-vault had long lain open. Its dimensions were two feet nine inches by one foot five inches, and two feet deep ; and it had been originally formed of five limestone flags, two for the sides, two at each end, with one large covering stone. It occurred to me, that a careful examination of the *debris* which still remained in this cist, would in some degree repay examination. I, accordingly, proceeded to remove the small stones and clay carefully, and in so doing I soon discovered small portions of charcoal, fragments of calcined bones, and, subsequently, a fragment of an unglazed fictile vessel, ornamented by the indented herring-bone or zig-zag pattern so commonly found on such remains. On proceeding with the work, other fragments of a similar nature presented themselves ; enabling one to ascertain pretty certainly the fact, that this small cist, when opened by the peasantry, contained a fictile sepulchral vase, enclosing fragments of burned bones, which had been broken to pieces by the disappointed investigators.

The examination of the Cloghmanty carn, although it has not enriched our museum, yet opens to us a page in the sepulchral customs of the primæval races of ancient Ossory, by no means unimportant or uninteresting. We read by this unerring record that, far back in the Pagan past, two human beings of mark and note in their generation, either poets or law-givers, or warrior-chiefs—most probably the former—lived and died. Honoured in their deaths as in their lives, the tribe assembled, and on the summit of this hill they piled the rock-chamber around the bodies, and then (the work of many hands) heaped up the lofty carn above it, and drew the wide circle around the tomb to mark the sacredness of the spot. They did not burn their dead then, neither did they do so at that early period in Britain, or ancient Gaul or Germany, or Northern Italy, or Denmark, as we learn from similar tomb records read by the great Danish antiquary, Worsaae. But our record has further information to offer us. In the course of centuries new customs obtained—perhaps new tribes supplanted the old. The dead were now burned ; the bones which the fire did not consume were collected and placed in the fictile vase ; but the old place of burial was not forgotten, and a share in the honour paid to the dead of

former ages was sought for, by constructing the cist-vaen in the already existing carn.

The name applied by the peasantry to this ancient remain is *Suidhe Fionn* (*Suidhe Fionn*), i.e. Fionn's seat, an appellation dating only from the prevalence of the comparatively modern romantic tales composed about that hero and his compeers. Perhaps the name of the hill on which it rests may have a more intimate connection with its history. Mr. Tighe indeed supposes it to bear a signification relating to the, presumed, ancient *cultus* of the country—he says (p. 624), “The name of *Clogh-man-ta*, the *Stone of God*, or of the great God (of similar origin with that of *Sliegh-na-man*, the *mountain of God*, on which was an ancient altar of the sun), is sufficient indication of the use of this enclosure. The name of *Man*, one of the most ancient appellations of the Divinity, and always connected with that primitive idolatry, which was spread to the east and west by the Cuthite or Sythic branch of the Noachidæ, is too interesting to be overlooked.” But this ingenious derivation has no foundation whatsoever on the propriety of the Irish language. *Man* does not mean “God,” neither is *Sliegh-na-man* (recte *Sliabh-na-m-ban*) the *mountain of God*, but the *mountain of the women*. We must therefore look for a more feasible interpretation. We know that from the most ancient times the Irish frequently named their heroes from some peculiarity of person, such as *Niall Glundubh*, or Niall of the black knee, monarch of Ireland, *Breasal Breac*, or Breasal the freckled, *Conghal Claen*, or the one-eyed, &c.; and amongst the Hy-Fiachra tribes we find an *Eoghan Mantach*, or Owen the toothless (*Tribes and Customs of Hy-Fiachra*, p. 67). Now *Cloghmanty*, for so the name is pronounced by the Irish-speaking people, is formed from *Cloč*, a stone, and *ḡannṡaḡ*, the oblique form of *ḡannṡaḡ*, meaning simply *gapped*, but often applied to persons who have lost some of their teeth. *Cloch Mantaigh* may therefore, as I am informed by Dr. O'Donovan, be translated *lapis edentuli*, the stone of the gap-toothed or toothless man. That learned Irish scholar entirely dissents from Mr. Tighe's interpretation of the word, as meaning “the Stone of God,” a derivation which seems to have been solely formed to suit the idea that the carn was a *Pyratheia*, or fire temple—an idea which is as totally groundless, as the proposed etymology is irreconcilable with the propriety of the Irish language.

I trust this step made by the Kilkenny Archæological Society towards the examination of our primeval sepulchral monuments, will form but the commencement of many similar investigations. We should not allow the many records of the past which still are ours, to remain unread. But let no rude hand tear open the leaves of that volume—let not empty and idle curiosity profane the dwellings of the dead. Let us tread within their limits reverently, and with a desire solely to read the past in them; not wantonly destroying, but carefully investigating them. By their means, observes the learned Danish antiquary already named, antiquity stands as it were revealed before our eyes;

they bind us more firmly to our native land, whose hills, and dales, fields, and meadows, thus become connected with us in a more intimate degree, as we learn to read those "sermons in stones," which the dwellers in our country more than twenty centuries ago, have left for our perusal.

ON SOME SUBTERRANEAN CHAMBERS IN THE COUNTY OF CLARE.

BY T. L. COOKE, ESQ.

[*Read at the Meeting of September 3rd.*]

It is now many years since I visited and took the dimensions of the underground cells of which I am about to place a description before the Kilkenny Archæological Society. They are all situate in the parish of Abbey, barony of Burren, and County of Clare. That parish was then smiling and prosperous, studded over with happy cottages and inhabited by a contented peasantry. Alas! how altered is the face of things there now. Famine and other causes have sadly changed the scene.

Dr. Molyneux (in his *Treatise on Danish Mounts and Forts in Ireland*) writes—"Many of the larger forts have caves contrived within them under ground, that run in narrow, long galleries—some of these above twenty-six feet in length, five feet high, and as many broad. These make several returns and join to one another in almost right angles. Where they meet the passage is enlarged, and, at the corners, form a sort of closets, that are square in some mounts and in others round. The walls or sides of these galleries are made of stones laid flat on one another without any mortar to join them, like our dry walls; and the passage is covered above with flag stones laid across, that rest with their ends on the side walls." The same writer further remarks—"These close and hollow passages lying under ground, so straight and small, without light, could never be designed to accommodate men, nor can we any way suppose them fit for their reception, so that they must have been contrived for the convenient disposal only of their stores, their arms, provisions, and such like warlike necessaries that here lay secure from weather, and at hand, still ready for their use, and under such a guard that kept them safe from thieves or enemies." Dr. Wood, of Cork, in his *Inquiry concerning the Primitive Inhabitants of Ireland*, p. 266 et seq., evidently alluding to Molyneux having called the mounds in which such *souterrain* habitations are found "Danish forts," says, "the *Belgic* forts in the south of Ireland, all of which are falsely ascribed to the Danes, are comparatively simple in

CORRIGENDA.

- p. 290, line 32, for "See Fionn," read "See Finn," and for "*Suidhe Fionn*," read "*Suidhe Finn*".
- p. 291, line 17, after "wide," dele " , ,".
- p. 292, line 18, for "covering stone," read "covering-stone".
- Ib. line 41, after "Gaul," insert " , ,".
- p. 293, line 4, for "Suidhe Fionn," read "Suidhe Finn," and for "*Suidhe Fionn*," read "*Suidhe Finn*".
- p. 322, line 3, from bottom, for "Argatros," read "Argetros".
- p. 323, line 9, for "Acadamy," read "Academy".
- p. 324, line 3, for "Fratertach," read "Flahertach".
- p. 387, line 14, for "centre," read "cavern".
- p. 400, line 28, after "what" insert "we".
- Ib. line 40, after "survey," insert " , ,".
- p. 407, line 38, *note*, after "custody," dele ") ".
- p. 410, line 4, from bottom, *note*, for "ΤΗΟΚΡΑΤΗ," read "ΤΗΟΚΡΑΤΗ".
- p. 412, line 25, for "sight," read "site".
- p. 413, line 3, for "HORE," read "HOARE".
- p. 433, line 28, for "for," read "but".
- p. 442, line 2, for "RSQ.," read "ESQ".
- p. 446, line 15, after "lordship," dele " , ,".
- p. 483, line 13, for "earls of Saxon," read "Saxon earls".
- p. 492, line 3, from bottom, after "*Kilkenny*," insert ") ".